

KEEPS OFF RAIN AND SHINE

THE UMBRELLA: ITS HISTORY AND HOW TO TAKE CARE OF IT.

An Expert Gives Some Information of Value—Washington One of the Greatest Umbrella Markets in the Country—A Convenient Way to Carry an Umbrella.

"Let me roll up your umbrella for you," said the proprietor of the well-known umbrella and cane shop on Eleventh street, near the Avenue, to a customer, who was making a fearful mess of furling a fine silk article he had just repaired. The customer willingly gave up the job, and the umbrella artist in an instant had the article neatly and compactly rolled up, every fold exactly in place, and not a bunch or twist visible anywhere.

"It's so strange," the dealer remarked, after the gentleman had taken his leave, "that not one person in fifty knows how to properly secure an umbrella. It is usually rolled so that the tips of the ribs resemble a chicken's foot, and a six-dollar umbrella is made to look like a 75-cent one. This is the way it should be done," he continued, taking up an umbrella, and suiting the action to the word. "First, shake the folds out, then grasp the umbrella securely around the tips of the ribs with the right hand, placing the left near the opposite end; then continue to turn the umbrella; at each turn loosen the grasp of the right hand in order to allow the ribs to form themselves into position. Continue this until all the folds are secured."

The reporter assumed a look of one thirsting for knowledge, and the umbrella dealer continued in a confidential tone:

"It is much better never to roll a good silk umbrella, but secure the tips of the ribs with a small rubber ring that is made for that purpose. When your umbrella is wet never set it down except with the handle end on the floor. This is done in order to prevent the joints of the ribs near the ferrule from rusting. Many people appear to think they can use their umbrella as a cane, and to stamp with at places of amusement without injury. There is nothing that will so completely wreck a good umbrella as using it in this way. Never carry your umbrella in a close-fitting case. It will cut the best silk in a remarkably short time. In purchasing an umbrella care should be used to see that it is not shop-worn. Some may think this unnecessary caution, but the experience of years has taught me otherwise. Umbrellas and canes should not be placed in the same stand or rack, for the reason that one is liable to get the end of the cane in the folds of the umbrella, usually to the detriment of that article. Many umbrellas have come to grief in this way, and the owners have been unable to account for the mistake. When you see a gentleman with a cane warped out of shape until it resembles a bowlegged man you can wager that the cane has been in a rack with wet umbrellas.

"What is your busiest season?" asked the reporter.

"From March 15 to July 15; during that time we make and repair from fifty to seventy-five umbrellas a day. What has become of the large number of umbrella repairers that formerly traveled from door to door? They were compelled to give way to improvement, and are now almost a thing of the past.

"The history of umbrellas? They have held an important position in affairs of state in Greece and Italy from time immemorial. In China they have been in constant use since two centuries before Christ. Until a comparatively recent date umbrellas were in use in Italy and France only as a sunshade. An English dictionary of 1708 defines an umbrella as a screen commonly used by women to keep off rain. Jonas Hanway is said to have been the first man who commonly carried an umbrella in the streets of London about 1750. Up to that time their use had been exclusively confined to women. They were first kept in the halls of great houses and at coffee-houses to be used in passing from the door to the carriage. The Italian cavalier usually carried a leather umbrella while on horseback. Parasols made their appearance in England and France in the seventeenth century. Their use was limited to few. In 1769 a company was formed in Paris to loan parasols. Umbrellas were introduced in the United States about the eighteenth century, but were not used by the sterner sex for years after that time. There have been great improvements made in umbrellas in the past few years. Formerly rattan and whalebone were used for the ribs. The larger number are made with eight ribs; sometimes as many as sixteen are used. In China and Japan they use forty or fifty ribs in constructing their umbrellas. The paragon frame, which is so generally used, was patented in England in 1832 by Samuel Fox. The manufacture in this country is almost entirely confined to Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston, where there are about three thousand five hundred hands employed in manufacturing canes and umbrellas. The manufacturers of parasols and umbrella handles are complaining that the peasants of Switzerland are injuring their trade to a great extent, and this appears to be on the increase each year. During the warm season the peasants guard their herds of goats on the mountain side, but as soon as autumn approaches their flocks are driven to the valleys and placed in winter quarters. Each member of the family, including wife and children—and of the latter there is usually a good supply—work early and late carving handles for parasols and umbrellas. Some of the most handsomely-carved handles come from Switzerland. The children are taught to use a knife at a remarkably early age. It has been said that the Swiss give their children carving tools to cut their teeth on. In the spring their winter's work is disposed of to jobbers at a remarkably low figure, so much so that it would seem that they place little or no value upon their own work.

"It is not generally known," continued the dealer, after a pause, "that there are more umbrellas used in Washington than in any other city in the United States with the same population. This is accounted for by the fact that the majority of the people are employed indoors, and consequently do not become accustomed to the rays of the sun. The umbrella is, therefore, made to do duty during the heated term and during the colder months or rainy season; the prudent person is rarely found without one, so that they are in use the year round."

Upon inquiry at the one shop, it was learned that they disposed of more than 20,000 umbrellas last year, which is about 1,666 per month, or 64 per day. Mr. Baum disposed of 12,000 during the past year, which would be 1,000 per month, or 40 per day.

There appears to be an increasing demand for umbrellas and canes with a crook on the handle for the purpose of hooking it in the arm-hole of the coat. Anyone who will form the habit of placing his umbrella in this position, instead of setting it down, will soon find it a great convenience, to say nothing of insuring him against loss. A suitable crook, however, is not easily found. The crook must not be too great, but just enough to remain in position securely and be removed with ease. The handle should be smooth and of hewn if possible. Metal handles are apt to soil the gloves. It is believed that some one of the manufacturers will soon have

an umbrella on the market with a handle adapted to the purpose above described.

If it were not for the wise provision of Providence the umbrellas now in use would hardly prove a protection. Each drop of rain is formed according to a mathematical law; its size depends on the density or rarity of the atmosphere. These little drops are eased down to the earth on a cushion of air as a wee babe on a pillow. Were it not for this air-cushion they would come like so many bullets, cutting vegetation into shreds, pelting the cattle, and wounding every unfortunate person caught out in a shower. We would need umbrellas of sheet-iron and clothes like the steel armor of the old warriors.

There are a great many different styles and ways in which umbrellas and canes are carried. While each one should be allowed to adopt his own particular manner of carrying them, no gentleman will carry his cane or umbrella over his shoulder or under his arm with both ends projecting. Yet one sees those that look like gentlemen doing so on crowded streets and in public conveyances. Persons who persist in doing this should be classed with the "banana-skin fiend."

VALUE OF CHEERFULNESS.

It Helps as Much as Efficiency in the Struggle for Existence.

It does not take much to diffuse a little brightness around one in this world, and vice versa. A business man the other day discharged a lady clerk because she was always looking on the dark side of life, with scarcely ever a smile for anybody or thing, and ready to shed tears without the slightest notice. The poor man said that "such a constant dampness of atmosphere gave him such a series of colds as was likely to throw him into a consumption," so in desperation he took advantage of the very first misspelled word to make a fictitious row and get rid of her. And this is what afterward happened: He immediately advertised in a daily paper for a competent typewriter, who "must know her profession and be cheerful."

The next morning he almost shed tears himself, for he received no less than sixty responses from as many young women, willing to work for high pay, for low pay, for almost no pay, who represented themselves as of all ages, from thirty-three to sweet sixteen; and the way that some of these epistles sent as specimens of their author's handwriting were written and spelled in maddening fashion or told family histories to awaken sympathy. Oh, it was pitiful that in a whole city full of girls willing to work there were so few who really knew how to work or how to answer a business letter. The whole lot, with the exception of six, after a deal of sifting, were the merest trash, and the writers were two cents poorer—to say nothing of paper and envelope—than before they bid for what they knew nothing about.

"How will you settle it?" asked one who was an interested spectator. "I will send replies to the six, and take the one that stands the test of examination, and who does not look as though it would be rainy weather with her all the while."

Now, if young girls who have their way to make in life would cultivate the common sense view of the matter, they would stand a far better chance. If you have got to work for a living do not go at it whining about having seen better days. Get over false pride, respect yourself, and exalt and dignify your work, whatever it is, if it is only addressing wrappers or standing behind a counter, by doing it the very nicest and best way you can. Be punctual, dress neatly, but eschew cheap jewelry and finery, and, above all things, look up and be cheerful!

Nobody can enjoy or have more of God's pure sunshine in the city than you, and you can admire pretty things without the trouble of caring for them as you would have to if you owned them, and if you are aiming for higher places you will never get there unless you work early and late to perfect yourself in your business, unless you are willing to climb. There are lots of smart, bright, pretty girls just out of schools and colleges all ready and anxious to earn an honest living, and you, whoever you are, must do as well as they to enable you to stand by their side.

But to come back to the sunshine of life. You must be cheerful if you expect to succeed. The other day there was a young lady clerk from one of the Departments made a call at noontime to see about some work she was having done in the way of dressmaking. It being noon she carried her lunch along (in her pocket) to eat as she talked in the seclusion of the modiste's parlor. On her arrival Madam Modiste, who is as good a woman as she is a lady tailor, said to her, "Come right down stairs. I always provide my girls with a cup of tea to go with their lunch, and you are welcome to one and a slice of brown bread and cake if you will come."

There was no nonsense or false pride about this clerk. She recognized an opportunity here, and in every woman a sister—a sister, perhaps, with a craving heart, and if poor so much the more empty a life. She saw at a glance that her lunch was luxurious compared to that which many of these poor girls had. "There!" she exclaimed, as, with a successful grab, she brought forth a small pink-and-gold-striped paper bag, in which was a hard-boiled egg, some baby pretzels, and an orange. She immediately said she liked brown bread, even if it was hard, and on taking a slice she gave a pale-faced girl beside her the boiled egg, saying, "Eat that; I know the hen that laid that egg, so it must be good!"

That brought a smile out on her companion's shaded countenance, and then she gave another sister on the other side the orange; then passing round the baby pretzels that all could have a dip into the pretty bag that would have held something if it hadn't been pretty. The fact that it was pretty made even it minister to the pleasure of a few who found pleasures none too plentiful, and who were ready to enjoy anything new. The whole thing cost nothing, only a disposition to scatter smiles instead of frowns, to make everybody else feel as though sunshine had rested on them for a moment. In her heart she only thought of it all as an incident, a trifle. Still, doing even that made her face always radiant with light, so that some who loved her most in the sweet sanctity of home and fireside always called her "Sunshine."

Tried to Swallow the Dice.

Walter Jones and George Tolbert, two boot-blacks, were enjoying a quiet game of crap in front of Harvey's saloon yesterday afternoon. The pennies were changing hands rapidly. Officer Orlans surprised them, captured both players, and carried them to the First Precinct. While being searched, Tolbert attempted to swallow the dice, but before he could accomplish it, the officer choked them out of his throat.

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